

124
EIGHT
LETTERS

TO
HIS GRACE
— DUKE of —,

On the Custom of
VAILS-GIVING
In ENGLAND. *K*

S H E W I N G

The Absurdity, Inconveniency, National Disreputa-
tion, and many pernicious Consequences
of it to all RANKS of the PEOPLE.

W I T H

PROPOSALS for an encrease of WAGES, and other Advan-
tages to DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. HENDERSON, under the Royal
Exchange. 1760.

[Price One Shilling.]

RIGHT
LETTERS

TO HIS GRACE

DUKE OF

VALENTINE
IN ENGLAND



NEW

The Alliance, Incomparable, National League
and many other persons
of the all ranks of the People

WITH

Report of the Committee of the League, and other Address
to the People of the League

LONDON

Printed by C. Chapman, under the Royal
Exchange, 1840

[Price One Shilling]



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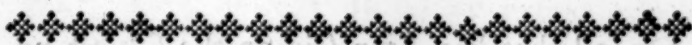
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General Reasons against Vails-Giving.



LETTER I.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF—.

MY LORD,



HERE is too much reason to believe that *Corruption* will grow spontaneously, but if we *sow* and *plant* it, what can we expect to *reap*, from *generation to generation*?

THOUGH it should require Talents, superior to mine, to supply arguments sufficient to conquer a custom rendered formidable by its long continuance, yet there is *glory* in the *attempt*; and

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I

I think it no small honor to communicate my thoughts to *Your Grace*. I have considered the subject with all the attention I am master of: the happiness of my *Country* and my *Friends* is deeply interested in it; and I trust my labor will not be lost; for though the evil is formidable, it does not appear to be *invincible*.

Of all that has been said on the subject nothing strikes me more than the reasons assigned by the society of *Clerks to the signet in Edinburgh*. They say that having taken under their consideration the practice of giving drink-money to servants, it appeared to them,

1st, "That the Custom has been destructive
" of the morals of Servants.

2dly, "That it is a discredit to the police
" of this Kingdom.

3dly, "That it is an interruption to hospitality, and a tax upon the domestic intercourse
" of friends."

THEREFORE

THEREFORE they unanimously agreed to concur with those honorable Persons, and Societies, who have set the laudable example in abolishing this pernicious Custom, and they accordingly, *Resolved,*

1st, “ That after WhitSunday 1760, every
“ member of the Society will effectually pro-
“ hibit their servants from *taking* any Vails or
“ Drink-money from any person whatever.

2dly, “ That after the above term no mem-
“ ber of the Society shall *give* Drink-money
“ to the Servants of any person whatever.”

THE greatest difficulty *to us*, seems to arise from an *opinion* that it is necessary to enter into *associations* here, whereas the thing itself is less difficult to accomplish, than forming the *associations*: for this we may appeal to experience, several having been attempted in vain, *Private Clubs, Trading Companies*, or other *Fraternities* may *associate*, and we are told that several Noblemen and Gentlemen have done so some years since, witness the *Opera Club*, com-

posed of persons of the highest rank in the three Kingdoms, but as it has not produced any general effect, we may naturally infer that this custom, like some other kinds of *Corruption*, which have taken *deep root* amongst us, requires the *virtuous* part of the nation to set more generally to work, before they can eradicate it; and we may be sure that whether *virtuous* or *vicious*, the custom is become so *burthensome*, that numbers of us will follow *the Lead*.

WITH respect to the reasons which are often alledged for giving countenance to this practice, they amount to no more than this. “ *I like my servants and therefore submit to the Custom; I confess it is, in all views injurious, and in some respects mean and contemptible, but I had rather do this than run the hazard of losing them. Besides, if other people will give them money foolishly, how can I avoid it, without appearing mean.*” Here it may be observed, that the obligation to *Society*, not to do a *public injury* for a *private convenience*, is not regarded; but what is most surprizing, *domestic ease and comfort* are not weighed against the *vanity* which this sort of reasoning carries along with

with it. Besides, if *additional wages* with *kind treatment* will not secure such servants, they can have no great Title to the appellation of *good ones*; and no body can consistently esteem a servant who is supposed to be devoid of that Virtue which constitutes the most amiable Character of a Man. If the Master will resolve to encrease the wages of his servants, in lieu of the *Vails* they used to receive, it is in fact only giving money to his own servants, instead of bestowing his liberality on the servants of other people; and if *this* is deemed a sufficient reason for the Servant to leave *his place*, it is also a sufficient motive, to the Master, in the *Testimonial* of his servants behavior, to mention the *cause* of their separation. There is *freedom* on both sides, and a *good reason* should be assigned for parting with a *good servant*: it would be soon seen how this would operate,

It is natural to expect upon a change of a custom so long in use, that the generality of Servants will require an *augmentation* of wages, and there can be no doubt but *some* will be high in their demands, whilst *others* will trust more

to the generosity of their Masters ; but if every Master is left to his own conduct, the design will work for itself without any necessity of *Associations*. Though I do not dispute the propriety of such agreements in *Scotland*, where their domestics are less *numerous*, perhaps *better disciplined*, or more sensible of their obligations, yet it seems to be adding *one* absurdity to *another*, to suppose it impracticable in *England*, to be done by any other means. For besides that such measures are of a *tender nature*, it is impossible in a vast variety of circumstances for every body to be brought into the same method ; or even to tie people down to their agreements after they are made ; and to suppose ourselves in such a state of *dependency* on our own *Domestics*, who *depend* on us, as to require *associations*, seems to be injurious to our *common liberty*. Every family is interested not to put the *fidelity* of their Servants to the issue of *Vails-giving* ; and as this Custom is upheld by a chain of mischiefs so strongly linked together, it is become our *duty* as *good Subjects*, to break it, and dissolve the tie. I make no doubt but that I shall give *Your Grace* such reasons for the *necessity* of abolishing this Custom,

that

that you will employ your power and influence for a purpose so evidently productive of happiness to the commonwealth. I can by no means conceive that the few and uncertain *advantages to Masters*, or *the emoluments to Servants*, arising from this custom, can be worthy of being weighed in the balance, against the many *pernicious* effects of it.

I am, &c.





*The Custom of Vails-giving injurious to Dignity and
Generosity.*



LETTER II.

To the same.

YOUR argument, MY LORD, seems to lie in a very narrow compass. *Shall we continue to live in a state of mean dependance on our Domesticks, or show them that humanity and regard which they will be entitled to as servants, when they serve for what we pay them, and not for what they receive of STRANGERS?*

THIS Custom of *Vails-giving* seems to be like *play* at a gaming-house; if you *win* at one time as much as you *lose* at another, yet you are considerably out of pocket; and as we vulgarly say, that “ *what is got over the Devil’s*
“ *back*

“ *back is spent under his belly,*” the general part of Servants hardly receive so much advantage by *twenty* Shillings in Vails, as by *ten* uniformly paid in *wages*.

To confine my present thoughts to *dignity* and *generosity* of conduct, with respect to the object in question, it must excite the highest indignation in a generous mind, to see a *Gentleman* anxious to get *change* for his *gold*, that he may be provided with the means of paying for his dinner, at the house of his *friend*, perhaps at the table of one of the greatest personages in the Kingdom. *Your Grace* would sooner carry a basket to Market and *buy* your own Mutton, than permit it to be *sold* by *retail*, in *your own presence*; but in fact it is *sold*, and you must pardon me, *my noble Lord*, it is *sold at an exorbitant price*. Perhaps your Guest has not consumed the value of a *Shilling*, and he gives *six Servants half a Crown each*, in return for it. Perhaps he is a man of *low fortune*, and yet *your Grace* may esteem him *highly* for his *Virtue* and *Knowledge*, and delight in his company. You would be glad to *serve* him, but you *perplex* and *distress* him.

him. He entertains *Your Grace* with his *discourse*, and pays honor to your Rank and Condition, but he demands *nothing* for it. *Your Grace* entertains him with a *dinner*, and your Servants make him *pay for it ten times as much as it is worth to him*. Can you enjoy the advantages of your *high Station*, your *Great fortune*, and *nobleness of mind*, with such an Incumbrance? Can the pleasures of *friendship* in all their *native simplicity*, and charms, be enjoyed under those *disguises* and *constraints* which are the appendages of this Custom?

BUT, *my Lord*, it may be, that your *friend* comes to your Table in hopes of receiving some advantage from your *countenance* and *recommendation*; and you *mean* him *well*. Perhaps it is not in your power to *serve* him; but the very thought of doing him an *injury*, whilst he is amusing himself with any *expectancy*, cannot possibly be entertained by *Your Grace*, without the *biggest disdain*: but it is more than probable that you really *injure* him. To pay *extravagantly* dear for a dinner, and at the same time to *acknowledge an obligation* for it, is offensive to
common

common sense. Though the evil is *most felt* by him who has *least money*, this custom has no Vestiges of any real *grandeur* in the *Host*, or any *hospitality* towards the *Guest*: but with a fond opinion of *imaginary greatness*, Men of the *first rank and distinction* are acting a *very mean part*. Custom cannot change the nature of things; nor can this practice ever *appear* consistent with the *idea* of *dignity* and *beneficence*, but totally repugnant to every thing that is generous and noble.

My friend who gives me part of his simple repast, though it consists but of one dish, let it be good of its kind, and elegantly served up, with a hearty welcome and free egress; if to this he politely thanks me for my Company when I take my leave, he treats me *nobly*, and I feel the pleasures of Society *pure and unmixed*.—Happy were it if the *Great*, who are but few in comparison, were the only persons subject to this enormous abuse: but alas, if we enquire into *common life*, the case is just the same, except that the Servants receive *Skillings* instead of *half Crowns*; and there is but *one* or *two* attend, instead of *five* or *six*.—What a *farce* it is, in a country where
the

the people *pride* themselves in *freedom*, and what they call *good sense*; and where they suppose themselves *adepts* in the *art of living*; to observe the Master of the House, with all the *adroitness* he can exert, shun the sight of his *Guests*, when they leave his doors, that he may not be a spectator of a *practice*, at which he is equally *ashamed* and *scandalized*, notwithstanding the *universality* of it!

WILL *Your Grace*, whose Zeal for the welfare of your Country and *Fellow-subjects*, has shone forth with such splendor on all occasions, countenance a Custom, which though glossed over with *pomp* and *parade*, is *intrinsically mean and slavish*!

I am, &c.

Several



Several Anecdotes shewing the absurdity and inconvenience of Vails-Giving.



LETTER III.

To the same.

THE frequent opportunities I have had of conversing on the subject, furnishes me with the accounts of several Facts and curious Anecdotes, which may serve to set it in a more exact point of view, than any declamation.

WHERE *benevolence* ought to appear, as the Sun in his meridian glory, this Custom appears the more *sad* and *gloomy*. The *beads of the Church* are the Messengers of *peace* and *good-will* to mankind, and should be the first to oppose

a *Practise* which has no *peace nor good-will* in it; but on the contrary is of the nature of *Sin*, universally condemned, though universally committed.

THE Tables of the *Dignitaries* in the Church, are supposed to be accessible sometimes to the *inferior Clergy*, as those of *Generals*, to *Subalterns*: and the *rich* as well as *dignified*, act like themselves, and agreeably to their *high office*, when they entertain the *poorer clergy* who are *ingenious*, and *men of character*. Supposing none are admitted, unless they are *invited*, they are hardly left to their choice, whether they will *come* or not: the expectation which many entertain from the smiles of their *patron*; the flattering discourse of *great men*, even when they *mean* nothing, nor *intend to deceive*; the *social* desires of some, the *vanity* of others, and the *duty of the Inferior Clergy*, render it necessary, on certain occasions, to wait on their *Superiors*, to pay the honor due to their high office. But alas, *my Lord*, what shall we say of *Religion*, *Fortune*, and *Honors*, when the poor Country parson is obliged by the *Tyranny* of this Custom to pay
more

more for *one dinner*, than will feed his *large family* for a *week* ! When the lot of a man of education is such, that he must live on 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year, if his social affections lead him to *marry*, and he becomes the more excellent member of the commonwealth by his *encrease*, would it not go to *Your Grace's heart* to see him *distressed* by this *monstrous Custom* ? I have the utmost reason to think it is extremely mortifying to the Benevolent minds of our Prelates; and I wish, for their honor, they would take the Lead in dropping it.

I HAVE heard numberless stories, which are subjects both for *Laughter* and *Sorrow*, as they are seen in different points of view.

AN *Officer* of great bravery not many years since, demanding of the servant to speak with his Master, was refused in very *uncivil* terms. From several concurring circumstances it appeared to be entirely an act of the *Servant*, and not of the *Master*; and the secret cause of it was that the Officer had never added any thing to this Servant's *Vails*. The Gentleman's business was urgent, and the insolence of the Servant so great, that

that he was induced to *strike* him; and then complained to the Master of the indignity which had been offered him. Here was a capital piece of insolence against the *Master* as well as against the *officer*; and though one might suppose that the latter had carried the matter too far, yet the greatness of the occasion warranted it.

THE Custom of giving *money*, upon almost every occasion, has naturally this consequence; it creates *insolence in office*, and when a *Servant* is more *bold* or *rapacious* than common, he *over-acts his part*, and the Master has hardly his own choice to see whom he *pleases*: the person who gives the most money, has the fairest Chance, and the Master is in a kind of subserviency to the *humor* or *avarice* of his own Menial Servants.

ANOTHER *young Officer*, in the pursuit of preferment, which his Patron had promised him, emptied his pockets of all his *Shillings* and *Half-Crowns*: but experience had taught him that no metal less valuable than *Silver*, would obtain a safe passage through the *Servants hall*. At length he bethought himself of a very humorous
though

though melancholy expedient; he cut the *silver buttons* on his Coat half off; and as he passed through a double line of Servants, plucked a button and presented it to each of them: *habituated* as they were to the *touch* of this metal, they could not draw back their hands. The Noble Lord was equally *touched* with the *humor* of the adventure, and the *rapaciousness* of his own Servants, and did justice to the *merit* of the Officer.

YOUR Grace remembers Col. ———: as he was sitting at the Duke of ———'s table, he enquired the names of the several Servants who attended. His Grace ask'd the reason of it. "Why," says he, "*My Lord Duke, in plain truth, I cannot afford to pay for such good dinners as your Grace gives me, and at the same time support my equipage, without which I cannot come here; therefore I intend to remember these Gentlemen in the Codicil of my will.*"

It was a humorous remark of ———, who had been employed by ——— for some time, in laying out his Gardens. When he was taking

C

his

his leave, and all the Servants were *ranged in rows* on both sides the door, ready to receive their *fees*, though in the presence of their Master, he stopt short, and said, “ *Apropos my Lord! I have yet something of consequence to recommend to your Lordship. It is to throw these rows into CLUMPS!*”—Indeed it seems to be of more consequence to make a proper arrangement in this *moral and political*, than in the *vegetable* part of his Lordship’s jurisdiction.

ONE of my friends was telling me the other day of an acquaintance of his who used when he passed through a *double row of Servants*, to shake them by the hand, and enquire after *their health*. Another carried his pocket full of *golden pippins*, and that the name of something *golden* might secure the Courtesy of his friend’s Domestics, he presented each of them as he passed, one of these apples. These adventures ended with seeming good humour, but not without many *secret curses* on the part of the Servants, who thought themselves injured by such treatment.

WHEN

WHEN ——— took his leave of the Duke of ———, and shook the Steward by the hand, as a token of his friendship, all the Servants concluded that he had presented *twenty Guineas* at least, to be divided amongst them: they demanded their *shares* accordingly, and would not be perswaded that nothing had been given, infomuch that *the noble Duke* himself was obliged to interpose, and send to ———, who assured his Grace that *he had not left one farthing with the Steward, nor intended it.* When the *greatest Personages* in a Kingdom are thus obliged to become *Actors* in such *Scenes*, is it not a most *wretched Farce* indeed!

ANOTHER Story has reached my Ears which has some *atrocious circumstances attending it.* What would your Grace think if your Servants should dare to cut the harness of any of your friend's horses? This was done at Mr. ——— to a Reverend Gentleman, the consequence of which was, that before he had travelled a mile the harness divided. One may readily conclude that a heavy complaint was made of this outrage; and satisfaction was made for the harness:

but *unluckily* more was charged, than it was esteemed worth, verifying the *opinion* of the Servants, as to the covetousness of the Old Gentleman, but not *justifying their conduct*. The consequence was, that the friendship of these persons finished with the adventure, and the Servants were discharged, as they richly deserved.

It is a more *humorous* Story they tell of ——— after he had dined with ———. The Servants with assiduous duty, had taken the best care of his friend's *Hat, Sword, Cane, Cloak*, and among the rest his *Gloves* also. When he came to demand them, every Servant, with the most *submissive* respect brought his part of the Old Gentleman's *personal furniture*, and so many *Shillings* were distributed with his usual liberality; but as he was going away without taking his *Gloves*, one of the Servants reminded him of it, to which he answered, “ *No matter friend, you may keep the Gloves, they are not worth a Shilling.*”

How many *odd* adventures happen, but all in point to shew the absurdity of the custom; and how many acts of *Violence* and *Contempt of De-*
corum

corum are transacted under the cover of it, might make many Volumes. Are they not all strong Indications of *anarchy* and *confusion* in *Domestic Life*, and as great injuries to our *common freedom* as to our *common sense*? We change our *fashions* very often, but we are so unaccountably *facinated* with this *silly practice*, that a Lady's fondness for a *Parrot*, a *Lap-Dog*, or a *Monkey*, never was carried half so far. *Your Grace is a friend to Your Country and Mankind*; and *wisdom* can never be shown better, than where *Folly* has involved its Votaries in a *Labyrinth* of perplexities.

I HAVE known a Captain of a man of war, who has not been possessed of 10l. a year, independant of *his pay*, give *five guineas* for sleeping two nights at a *Nobleman's Seat*. Is this the way, my Lord, to support the *Freedom* and independency of the Nation? He was an *honest* and *brave* man, and would have died a thousand deaths rather than *sell* his Country, but how many may be tempted to *sell it*, with a view to *live in it*, upon the com-

mon footing of their Equals, in rank ? If our *expences* exceed the measure of our *property*, what must be the consequence ? The *Servant* will most assuredly *sell his Master*, if he can get *good money* for him ; the *Master* will be necessitated to sell his *patron*, and his *patron*, by the same irregularity, will sell the *liberty* of his Country, to his *Prince*, if he will *buy* it ; and give his *Prince* into the *bargain*, if it will enable him to gratify his passion, be the object ever so *trifling*.

VARIOUS are the Forms in which this *Vails-giving* appears. One of these, is the Custom of *card-money*, or leaving *twice* or *thrice* as much on the Table, as the Cards used on it, are worth, the *Servant* being *supposed* to provide them at *his cost*, as is generally practised. This is well known to be carried much further, where the company play in the *high stile*, that is, like *Gamesters*, for the *Servants* then pay also for *wax Lights* ; and sometimes for the *Coals* they burn ; and indeed there seems to be as much reason for *one* as the *other*. This affectation of *show* has been very highly commended by one part
of

of Mankind, because a *vast number* of people may by this means assemble at a small expence to the Host: but in the mean while the order of Things is reversed: the splendor of the shew, and the instruments of the diversion, being known to be provided at the *expence* of the Servant, and at *his risk*, it sets him upon higher ground than his Master, in proportion as the *house* only can be said to belong to the latter; the Servant provides the instruments of our Diversion, and we pay *him* for them. Does this allow of any Construction that can possibly render the *Master* or *Mistress* in the *lowest degree respectable to the Guest*, or screen them from *secret* contempt, for thus *pretending* to Grandeur, whilst they are acting a part, which according to the common sense of Mankind, is mean and unworthy? The employment of an Inn-keeper is useful to Society, but *no Gentleman* takes it up, if he can avoid it, by any shift whatever: Yet in the eye of Reason the *Inn-keeper* may as well affect the State of the *Peer*, as the *Peer* sink down to the condition of the *Inn-keeper*; and if the *Guest* pays as much to

the *one* as the *other*, let the Entertainment be the same, and the difference, in the most essential Article is but in *name*, and not in *substance*. As to real *grandeur*, and the distinctions of *Rank*, *Fortune*, and *nobleness of mind*, they are all, in this instance, quite out of the question.

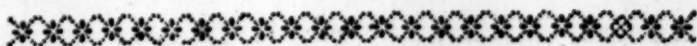
I am, &c.



Vails



Vails considered both as a Tax, and an act of Venality.



LETTER IV.

To the same.



HERE are confessedly some contradictions in the *characters of all nations*, and we cannot plead an exemption. No people are more jealous of their liberty than the inhabitants of this island. If our *Superiors* demand any homage which we do not think their due, we instantly grow impatient, and *oppose* them; but we are not offended if our *inferiors* insult us; and a custom once established, though ever so *slavish*, is revered with more respect than our *Laws*, though our *Liberty* depends on them. Nothing clashes with the sentiments of a British subject more than the notion

tion of being *taxed* by any authority less than that of *Parliament*. We can no more submit to it, on any other terms, than we can give up *Magna Charta*: and yet by a strange kind of *pusillanimity*, unknown to our fore-fathers, even in barbarous times; we have now suffered our servants to *tax* us, under the Sanction of our own generosity. This is actually done in sum and substance by the *Custom of Vails-giving*.

IF an *exciseman* were to visit the house of one who *sold* nothing exciseable, though it happened but once in a year, such person would winch grievously at the *vexation*, if he did not bellow out for *liberty*: and yet *his own Servants* are permitted to interrupt *his domestic pleasures* every hour of *his life*. We grumble at it indeed as a very *bad Custom*, but we *submit*; and every man thinks himself as much obliged *to pay* for the intercourse he enjoys with his friends, as if he was *legally* taxed for it. If there was a *law* obliging him to pay, it would be often *violated*; but here we are led by the nose *without law*, and *without reason*.

To

To continue the allusion, I must beg leave to observe to Your Grace that this *tax* is almost reducible to a *standard*; it leaves no room for *munificence*, and as we pay according to the quality of the Master at whose Table we eat, and not according to our own rank and fortune, it is the more *burthensome*. An Alderman who dines with a *Lord Mayor*, may afford to give away four or five *half guineas*; but if a Gentleman of *two or three hundred* a year gives but so many *half crowns*, he must stand in the courtesy of the Servants, for a *safe retreat*. This Custom extends also to *Levees*, and *attendance on Great men in office*. When I have seen a body of Merchants wait on a Minister of state, the question has been “*how much shall we give the Servants?*” If any one of the company asks them “*for what?*” they stare at one another, but still they think they *must give*, if they ever mean to make their appearance a *second time*. Is this living, *my Lord*, with *freedom*, or with *honor*!

It is difficult to treat this Subject properly; the foundation of it is laid in *generosity*, but the superstructure is *rank corruption*, and yet people,
who

who are *free* in all other instances, and happily exempt from all other kind of *dependance*, are in this instance as great *slaves*, as their Neighbours. There is also something as capricious in the nature of this *tax*, as in the minds of those who comply with it. For instance, in some places, in the country, there is so much paid for a *breakfast*; in others, for *drinking tea in an afternoon*; for *holding a horse*; and for opening a *Coach-door*: for all these purposes, and many others in the *tariff of Vails*, a provision of *Shillings, half crowns*, and sometimes even *half guineas and guineas* must be made. So that to enjoy any degree of *Tranquillity*, a man must be rich enough to have a *Purse Bearer*, or so *poor* that no one can possibly expect any *gift* from him.

As a further proof of these *Vails* being considered as a *tax*, how seldom do we find the Servant return even the three poor monasyllables, *I thank you*? This indeed may be a proof of his good judgment, for it would be *impolitic* to return *thanks*; *that* would be making an acknowledgment of its being a *gift*, whereas he
does

does not intend to make any such acknowledgment.

THINGS are gone such lengths, that many imagine if *they* do not pay with a good grace, it will be levied on them by distress. One says, “ *I shall not make good my Retreat out of the House without being affronted unless I give.*” Another observes, “ *I do not chuse to be served with SMALL BEER when I call for WINE.*” Mercy, gracious Heaven! are not these very *Excuses* the strongest reasons for the abolition of this *slavish Custom*? What says the subject of a *despotic capricious Eastern Monarch*? “ *I will comply with a small demand without law, and without reason, lest a great one should be made, and I should be punished for my refusal.*” Is not this enough to rouse a *British subject*, to consult his own *safety*, as well as his *dignity and honor*?

NOR ought this to be considered only as an *arbitrary Tax*, it is also a *venal act*: can any thing be more evident than that we *corrupt* each others servants? One of the surest marks of *venality in office*, is when men *refuse or neglect* to do

do their duty without being paid for it, over and above what is fairly stipulated and agreed for. In the case of Vails, we allow of *Fees*, without *ascertaining* them. We pretend to expect that our *business* shall be done whether the *fees* are paid or not; but we know it will *not* be done, *with a good Grace*, unless they are paid. In our Intercourse with our friends, we sometimes consider how their *abilities* stand with regard to the payment of the *Fees* of admittance into our houses; and weigh their pecuniary worth in the one scale, against the supposed *necessity* of their paying the *Tax* on the other. Thus, as is observed of Lunatics, we draw a very *just conclusion*, from a *false principal*, by supposing a *Necessity* which exists only in our *timid* imaginations. We value a *good Servant* as a *good friend*, yet we do all we can to *corrupt* him, in a higher sense than can be imputed to any *public office*, for we bargain with him to allow of a *practice*, the direct tendency of which is to injure his fidelity to us, or in other words, to *destroy* his morals.

PERHAPS

PERHAPS Your Grace may not have had such opportunities of knowing these things, as I who move in a lower sphere, but I can assure you, that there have actually been some Servants, who expostulate with their Master, *for not ringing the bell, to call them up to collect their dues, and remonstrate against it as an unfair practice, that any Guest should depart WITHOUT PAYING.*

SUCH, *my Lord*, is the *height*, the *length*, and the *depth* to which this custom is arrived; and these are a *few instances* of the *notorious* abuses crept in amongst us, on account of it. If we mean to guard every Avenue by which *Liberty* may be *surprized*, we ought to watch the progress of this affected Liberality, this act of *real profusion*, this heavy Tax on Friendship, and this enemy to all *manly* Commerce, and *sincerity* of heart. Unless we mean to render ourselves the most arrant Triflers on earth, we must abolish this Custom!

I am, &c.

The



*The pernicious effects of the fashion of Vails-giving,
and the origin of it.*



LETTER V.

To the same.

IT is apparent beyond all contradiction, that this fashion of Vails-giving has destroyed many distinctions which are essential to Liberty, whilst it has made others which are detrimental to it; and as to Social Life it is most apparently at war with it. A man who depends on his wits, is compelled to act upon a level with a person of large fortune, or submit to be excluded where his company is really desired. If his intellectual endowments recommend him, and his company is both *useful* and *pleasing* to others; yet if he is *prudent* he must keep at a distance. If he complies he is in a fair way of

of being *ruined*; and if he does *not comply* he can neither be *beneficial* to himself or others, in the view of that intercourse, which is the foundation of those *sentiments*, and the preservation of those *springs* whence liberty flows. In common life this Custom is the cause of many mischiefs: the *pride* of doing as others, or of striving to remove the most distant suspicion of not being *rich*, hurries many into excesses, which a fortune, otherwise very competent, serves only to create distress to a family. The prevalency of *fashion*, and the *apprehension* of being *ill-treated by domestic Servants*, occasion much inquietude and disgust, and life is rendered much less agreeable than it might be. We impute these evils to our *Servants*, but we must thank *ourselves* for them: if by a strange kind of infatuation, we put our necks under *their* feet, and invite them to *tread* on us, *Power* is grateful to human nature, and it is natural for men to make use of it.

THE Custom of Vails I presume was originally founded in a *voluntary* gift; till by the imitation of our superiors we stamp it with a mark of *universal use*, and contracted for it, as an *appendage*

to wages. Many Servants are grown so fond of it, that they had rather have the same amount in *uncertain Vails*, than in *certain wages*: and by this indulgence, we have rendered a most useful body of People the less *worthy* as Subjects; the less *serviceable* to the Commonwealth; much the less *beneficial* to *domestic life*; much the less *happy* in *this* world; and upon the whole, in so much the greater danger of forfeiting their happiness in the *next*.

It is not many years since *Vails* had any being. In former times, when a *Prince*, or *Great Lord*, broke bread with one of *inferior rank*, HE made presents to the Servants of his *Host*, and whilst the Servants partook of the *princely largesse*, the *Host* had the honor of *kissing the hand of his Sovereign*. Now the barrier is beaten down, and all distinctions destroyed; we are *all princes*, and by the same rule of conduct we shall be *all beggars*. If we spend, or rather *squander* our money beyond the *measure of property*, or the *bounds of common sense*, the consequence must be poverty to *Individuals*, and consequently an *injury* to the *state* which those *Individuals* compose.

CONSIDERING that the *whole nation is now obliged to run so deeply in debt*, every one of us should reflect by what means they can best repay a portion of it. This may be done effectually, and with ease, if we conduct our *private expences as individuals*, so as every one may be enabled to contribute towards disburthening himself *as a member of the commonwealth*: and if at the same time we can render life more *easy and pleasant*, we shall have double reason to rejoice; otherwise we shall *mourn* all the days of our lives, in more senses than one. For Heaven's sake, *my Lord*, let us not *lament* a grievance which may be so easily redressed! Let us not, like *Cowards*, die *many* deaths instead of *one*; and, for want of a *little* resolution, go on complaining of our own *unhappiness*, when the *remedy is in our own hands*!

I am, &c.





*The absurdity of expecting Virtue from Servants,
under the Custom of Vails-giving.*



LETTER VI.

To the same.

WHATEVER refinements we may be induced to make, nothing can be more obvious than this: if the Master means to make his Guest *pay* for his entertainment, there cannot be any *true hospitality* in the case. If he means that he shall *not pay*, where is the *authority* of the Master over his own Servants? *How shocking* it is to the common Rules of Politeness, as understood by all the civilized nations of the world, that a man cannot ask his friend to break bread with him, without his paying for it; nor hardly to ride in *his Coach*, and never to play *at Cards*, without a *pecuniary* acknowledgment. One would be tempted to think

think the whole order and Œconomy of Life *reversed*, and that people kept Coaches, for the benefit of their *Coachmen*; and *Tables*, for the *Emolument* of their Footmen, and not for their own *pleasure* and *conveniency*. All the delicate Sentiments of *Humanity*, and the Charms of true *Politeness*, which is the legitimate daughter of humanity, are sacrificed to the *meanest Submissions*: our very *ideas* of Kindness, Dignity, and Hospitality, are wounded: nor is there room for exercising those Virtues, which render us *Patrons* and *Friends* with regard to the *lower classes* of the people *dependant* on us. The reciprocal ties of benevolence are, in a great measure, dissolved; for it is impossible the Master can *love* the Servant, when he sees the Servant does *not love him*: And how can the Servant love him, whilst *no solid confidence* is reposed; where the Confidence in him is *abused*; or where the very Conditions of the Contract made with him, are so deeply tinged with *Venality*? If the Servant may take money of his Master's *friends*, he may also take it from his *Enemies*. If he may make exactions from his Master's *Tradefmen*, he may be easily induced to overcharge his Master in the expenditure of money. And *lastly*, if the Servant may *sell*

his Master's Goods, as is sometimes practised of certain Articles, under the Notion of *Vails*; it is amazing upon the whole, that so few of them are betrayed into *down right Robbery*.

I HAVE heard of an *upper Servant* to a great personage, taking his Master's *gold watch*, and being asked for it, was answered; "*That he had taken it in lieu of the Vails of the Suit of Cloaths, which in point of time HIS HONOR should have left off, but chose to continue to wear.*" This was not esteemed a *Robbery*, but *incredible* as it may appear in one view, was acquiesced in as warrantable.

As to meriting the Kindness and Patronage of the Master, by *long and faithful services*, that is not so much as thought of by the generality of Servants. Indeed the Master has in some measure put it out of his *own power to serve them*; first by creating a kind of independency in the Servant, by means of this *fantastic Emolument*; and next by adding so much to his own Expences, by his *largesses to Strangers*, that he cannot afford to do acts of *Kindness* to his own Servants.

In

In the mean time, the Servant is not much awed by his Master's *frowns*, nor afraid of his Re sentiments. If by means of these *perquisites* he has feathered his nest, he has little to fear : and if he has not done so, there is a separate kind of interest sometimes formed ; and by virtue of a Combination, Characters may be obtained by artificial influence, which in some cases answer better than the more humble plan of *sincerity* and *obedience*. I apprehend this cannot prevail in any *great degree* ; but it is amazing, upon the whole, how the world is governed. If we consider how many people there are, whose false tenderness leads them to give Characters, and conceal capital Faults, we must not be surprized to hear so many complaints of bad Servants.

FROM such causes it arises that very few Servants consider any place as *good*, but when a great deal more is gained, than is equal to the value of the time of many who are born *Gentlemen*, and bred to genteel Employments. The appointments to *Clerks* in *public Offices*, and of *the inferior Clergy*, are not equal to the emoluments of many *such Gentlemen in livery*. What-

ever consideration may be due to the Domestics of Men of great Fortune, and high Office, it ought not to be shown by *secret* or *dangerous practices*, to injure their morals, or destroy their fidelity; such a rule of conduct cannot possibly dignify *Nobility*, nor render *Office* venerable.

We see the order of things is so often reversed, that there are many families where the *Footman* can command *twenty* or *thirty* Guineas, when the *Master* of it cannot command *five*. The Custom complained of, is one of the *secret* or more *apparent* causes of it; the Servant enriching himself by the Mystery of *Vails*, in proportion as the Master is *impoverished* by affording him opportunities of acquiring them. It must be granted, that this may easily happen when the *prudence* is all on the side of the *Footman*, whether the *Vails* be taken into the account or not; but the grand scope of my argument is, that it is the true wisdom of a State, to encourage *Virtue* and *Industry*, by making the *Servant* depend *solely* on the *Master*, for his pay. We might then naturally expect to see that *discipline* restored amongst us, which is essential
to

to the good order of society; and we *never* shall see it, till this happens: we ought therefore to complain of the *weakness* of *Masters*, not of the *insolence* of *Servants*: what we see is but the natural result of custom; and every *cause* must produce its *effect*.

I am with great respect, &c.



*The Character of this Nation amongst Foreigners
with regard to the Custom of Vails-giving.*



LETTER VII.

To the same.

I Have hitherto considered my Subject as respecting *ourselves* only, but every nation in the World has some regard to their reputation with the People of other Countries: And what Notions do foreigners entertain of *us*, concerning the Custom of *Vails-giving*? There are some few places abroad where this practice is observed, nearly in the manner as we use it, but it seems to be originally of *English growth*, and prevails most amongst our fellow subjects even in those Countries. Your Grace, who has been so careful of our national reputation in different quarters of the World, must have seen, that nothing sinks us so much in the esteem of foreigners as this Custom: other things

things they *see* but this they *feel*. We may talk of our *politeness*, our *humanity*, our *improvements in the art of living*, with all the *ease*, the *comfort*, and *love*, which *liberty* inspires, free from the extremes, either in the *lavish protestations* of the *French*, or the *civilities* of the *Germans*; but foreigners can hardly forbear *laughing* in our faces; the single absurdity in question bears down all before it. Far from their allowing that we enjoy a *superiority* over them, in the *true taste* and enjoyment of familiar intercourse, the *French*, *Italians*, and *Spaniards*, the *Dutch* and the *Germans* deride us, and even the *Portuguese* and the *Russians*, who are some *Centuries* behind us, ridicule us likewise on account of the *difficulties* we have taken so much pains to involve ourselves in, with regard to this Custom; the absurdities of which are too *glaring* to be concealed.

UPON a comparison with other nations, it may appear that this practice falls in with the *native* bent of our minds, more perhaps than with any other Country; and so long as it was a *voluntary act of generosity*, the distribution of these marks of *Liberality* amongst ourselves, on certain occasions, might deserve the name of

Bene-

Benevolence, and demonstrate a nobleness of mind. But when regard was no longer had to the distinction of persons, and what was originally a *gift*, was considered as a *due*, and expected of every one, at every place, the nature of it became totally changed.

THE Custom as it now stands is altered entirely, and it is the more inconsistent in as much as we are naturally more *reserved*, than the people of most other Countries. We do not hold it proper to converse so *familiarly* with our domestics, as is practised in many other parts of the Earth, where the difference amongst the Inhabitants both as to *wealth* and *freedom*, is much greater than with us. We treat our Domestics with *humanity*; but it is very far from our intentions to introduce a *levelling Scheme*, or to destroy all *respect*, except what is *paid for*; or all distinction *in rank*, except what is *supported by money*: we mean to employ our wealth to the ends of maintaining such true *subordination* and *good order* among our dependants, as may best answer the purpose of promoting *their felicity* and *our own*. But is it in the nature of things that this can be accomplished where the *Master* permits his *Ser-*
vants

wants to be paid by other people? I think it is *morally impossible* the end can be obtained.

WITH regard to *Foreigners*, this custom must appear to them no less *absurd* than it is *inconvenient*. If they find themselves under a necessity to pay for what they *eat* or *drink*, whether it be to the *Servant* or to the *Master*, they can hardly allow themselves to think that they have received an *obligation* or *civility*, but must consider themselves at an *Inn* or a *Tavern*, with this difference, that they are under a greater restraint than if they paid their money *openly* and *above board*.

A *foreign Minister*, who dines with a person of *prime quality*, on a set invitation in England, will find it difficult to get away for less than *ten guineas*; but *two or three guineas* is common in great families. He has not been used in *his own*, or any *other Country*, to pay any thing, when he dines with his friend; and can he avoid thinking us the *meanest*, the most *mercenary*, and at the same time the most *prodigal people upon earth*?

THERE are some things so absurd, that even *Custom* can never render them familiar. Nothing is so common amongst us as to *bear* and *see* our
fellow

fellow subjects, who have lived in the great world, declining the invitations given them, from meer disdain of the conduct of their *most lov'd friends*. What a strange contradiction would this appear to a *Foreigner*, if he did not know the *cause*; and knowing it, what a *wild infatuation* it must seem that we *countenance* such *indignities*. It is natural to every man to keep a loof, and withdraw a part of his esteem from the person, who under a notion of friendship puts him to a heavy and *unnecessary* expence. He who suffers an enormous price to be taken for that which can be no entertainment, to a man of virtue, but as it arises from *harmony in sentiments and mutual affection*, must be understood to be indifferent about *such harmony*. And if love and esteem amongst men are thus wantonly interrupted, as it were by consent of parties, such conduct must appear as a *Game at cross-purposes*. The Stranger will naturally ask, "Are your lives so long that you pass years of *disquiet*, without regarding them? Or are they so *happy* that you purposely seek a degree of *misery* by way of *alloy*? Are there not evils enough for you, which are *unavoidable*?"

BUT

BUT the Foreigner *sees* but very little of this wonderful piece of machinery, by the simple act of giving his Money: what will he think, when he bears a menial Servant bargaining, and enquiring minutely, in order to know *what are the Vails?* This is a question which might be very hard to answer; for if it depends on the pleasure of others, what answer can be made to it, than, "That other Servants have been understood to extort so much; and that they may do the same if they can?" But the truth is, that these *Vails* are frequently *ascertained exactly*, and the Master submits to be very closely questioned, and to give a very clear account of his *Life and Conversation*, as to the number of days of keeping Company at Cards, and Dinners, abroad or at home, &c. all which a Foreigner, though born and bred under an Arbitrary Government, rejects with *high contempt*. But if he is generous and polite, how would his indignation rise when he should hear a fellow question a Lady, in the same manner, whether she kept much company; how often she played at Cards; and not being satisfied, at length demand if she had not a Lying-in every year? This happened not long since to a Lady, who was too delicate, to bear the absurdity, as well as insolence

insolence of the question, and broke up the *congress* abruptly.

BUT, my Lord, when I call these Enquiries of Menial Servants by the harsh name of *insolence*, I recollect myself, and *ask their pardon*. Upon the present plan *every enquiry is pertinent and just* which relate to these adventitious Revenues to our domestics, for they *agree for certain wages on a permission to get all they can besides, in the best manner they can*. From the nature of their contract it is mutually understood that they are *to make as much as possible of their Service*, and 'tis of very little consequence to the Servant what *foreigners* will think of us. He leaves his Master and Mistress to look to the *reputation of the Nation*, as well as to *their own*; and in this decision no one can arraign his judgment, for the more *he gains*, by every art of making *Shillings and half Crowns* leap out of the pockets of his *Master's friends*, the more reason he will have to applaud his own *discretion*, and the *higher proof* he will give of *his own ingenuity*.

'Tis a common observation that *Spectators* often see faults which the *Actor* cannot discover in himself. God knows what *pain* it gives to
many

many Masters; but the *affected blindness*, and *real connivance* of the *Master*, and the *anxious Solicitude* of the *Guests*, to acquit themselves with propriety towards the *Servant*, is such a *tragi-comedy*, that if the *Servant* in *Livery* were ordered, by his *Master*, to take his fees in *claret*, and set down to the *Table* to drink it, a more *lamentable*, or a more *ridiculous Scene* could not be represented: and we may be sure that in proportion as *Foreigners* *envy* our happiness, in *other* respects, they *despise* and triumph over us *in this*. It must appear to them as a Custom introduced, on purpose to *hamper* and *perplex* *ourselves*; as if, because we are *free* with respect to *Regal*, or *Aristocratical* power, we could not be satisfied without introducing a *republican Tyranny*; and in order to render the absurdity the greater, submit to be *insulted* by each other's *Domestics*, or to pay them *liberally* for their *mercenary courtesy*!

Thus we seem to take pains to render ourselves *contemptible* in *their* eyes, as well as in *our own*; our high reputation for *sense* as well as *freedom* becomes their *derision*; and whilst we boast of our *humanity* and *generosity*, foreigners retort on us this most *irksome*

and *disfingenuous* Custom, in which neither *humanity* nor *Generosity* have any share.

YOUR Grace may think I am *too serious*, but I mean exactly what I say. I go frequently into the Company of *Foreigners*, and of people who have lived abroad, and hear the *complaints* of those who *feel* the evil. When my familiar acquaintance express their *discontent*, which they do almost as often as they talk of partaking of *their* friend's intended civilities ; or when *people of fortune*, in common with those whose circumstances are *confined*, complain of this Custom, I am shocked at *their pusillanimity* in suffering it, as well as at the *Custom* itself. In this View alone, was there no other reason, I would lend my Shoulder most heartily to get our *Vehicle out of the mire*, without any more *fruitless complaints* !

If there are any who live much at home, and only see their own Servants *receive* ; if these think the Custom *proper*, we must not be surprized ; and they are *their own Masters*. But if *policy* forbids them to alter this practice, because they find a *conveniency* in it, they must allow that as strong reasons may arise to *others*, upon the same principle

tiple of *conveniency*, to alter it. I am told there are some very *surprizing Stories* of persons who are deeply indebted to their Servants, and therefore *dare not talk* of any reformation of this kind. It is hardly possible that the number of such can be considerable, and I conclude that the *few* will assert *their own dignity*, lay by their *equipage and rich Clothes*, decline their *Public diversions and their Cards*, and live in a *Cottage*, rather than *disgrace* the *nobility* of their Ancestors, so as to become *dependant on their own Domestics*!--For a Nobleman or a Gentleman to submit to the practice of *Vails*, for fear his Servants should call on him, for the payment of what is their due, has something in it so much *below* the common Notions of a *Gentleman's Education*, it is hardly to be *credited*, that there is a *single* person in this situation!

If a noble Lord or Gentleman had an *amour* with his Chamber-maid, or there should be any other accidental amours, something might be said for the *silence* of the Parties; but even in this instance there are *so many other ways* of making *acknowledgements*, it is not to be imagined that any one will *plead for*

The Custom of Vails; on such an account. We may easily perceive how mankind are betrayed into excesses, even where the motive was originally most *worthy of praise*. YOUR GRACE sees how full I am of my Subject, and by what different lights I trace it through *many* of its windings; *all* of them I shall never be able to reach, nor is it *necessary* that I should.

I am, &c.





*The advantages which will probably arise from a
Change of this Custom, with some proposals for
the benefit of Masters and Servants.*



LETTER VIII.

To the same.

IF I should seem, *my Lord*, to affect any singularity, I make no doubt but *your Grace* will justify the purity of my intentions. It is an honor to be singular in some instances, but I have the utmost reason to think we are *nearly all of the same mind* in this particular, though we have not all the *same resolution*.

THE papers, from which I have composed the several Letters, which I have had the honor to write to your Grace, have lain by me several years, appearing only in *small detachments*: it now seems to be a proper time to march them boldly into the world, in *a body*: and if you have no objection, I intend to send them to the press, but not with your *Grace's name*, nor

with my own; though I am not ashamed of my *opinion*, nor have I varied much from it, in *practice*. I have lived the greatest part of my time in Countries of the *biggest despotism*, but as I have not offended *against* their laws, neither have I been much offended, either *by* their laws, or by any *acts of power*, except the interposition of their *Great Subjects* to stop the regular course of their laws, *and by this I have often suffered*. Hence I have received the strongest conviction of the advantages which my own Country enjoys, where justice is *generally* seen in the most amiable point of view, adorned with all her attributes.

IN the mean while I have constantly enjoyed the *happiness* of a *British Subject*, ever carrying about me the consciousness of that *superiority* which characterises our *genius* and *happy Government*, and to which under Providence we owe the distinguished advantages we possess, as a *Community* and as *Individuals*. This *sense of Liberty* is become so much a part of *my nature*, that whatever may happen to me, I believe I shall retain it to the *last gasp*. But, my Lord, after living free in *other Countries*, I could not entertain a thought of complying with a *slavish Custom* in my own, however such Custom might be supported

supported by numbers, and dignified by the *bighest Examples*. It seemed a little hard, at first, to be considered as a *foreigner*, or as one *ignorant* of his own Country ; as it was repugnant to the natural pride of the heart to *subject* myself to be called by any harsh name, as happens sometimes in such Cases : but I have often felt a kind of *triumph* in adhering to my own principles, when I have marched through a double Row of *powdered Gentlemen*, with as little apprehension that I was doing *wrong*, in keeping my hands out of my pockets, as when I walk in St. James's Park, the Trees being covered with *Frost*.

I MUST however confess to *your Grace*, that when I have dined, where there have been only *female* Servants, my partiality for the sex has induced me sometimes to drop a *Shilling*, especially if a Girl has been *young* and *handsome* : and I justified the action with this reflection, that I should be glad to see her in a condition to be happily married to some honest man, that her *beauty* might not prove her *bane* ; and, there has been some pleasure in seeing her receive this *Largess* with a *bended knee*, and not with the *lofty look* of a *Tax-gatherer*, as is generally seen in the *Men-servants*. Your Grace may not think this *Refinement* sufficient to justify the giving *Vails* in

any shape; and indeed as I grew *older* I became *wiser*, and resolved not to run any hazard of wounding the *freedom* of my fellow subjects, by complying with this practice, for the sake of any partiality. I also considered that when *Women* get into a habit of *taking money*, there is more danger of their receiving it for *bad purposes*, than for *good ends*; and that to *one female domestic* who has been kept *chaste* by the habit of receiving money, *under the notion of Vails*, we may, without the imputation of scandal suppose, that *five* have been debauched, *though not exposed*; and, in these great Cities, *five* more turned into the *Streets*, till the *miseries* they suffered there, and the consciousness of their *iniquities* led them to take Shelter under the roof of that humane and pious Institution the *Magdalane-House*, at a time when they could find *no other succour upon earth*.

BEFORE I take my leave of your Grace, I cannot help observing what a gross impropriety it appears to me in receiving either Sex, as *Domestic Servants*, without considering *reading* as a necessary qualification. What *can they* know of Religion; at least how *are they* to fill up the *many vacant hours*, which there must necessarily be, in all great families, *if they cannot read*? I am
afraid

afraid that strict *morality*, without *Religion*, is a very rare thing even amongst their *Betters*; and what security there can be for the *honesty* of the *Men* Servants, or the *chastity* of the *Women*, without the aid of *Religion*, is beyond my *conception*. Besides, it seems extremely proper that we should be acquainted, if the person we admit very near us, and on whom we must make a great dependance, is a *Christian*, or a *Jew*; a *Mahomedan*, or a *Pagan*; and if they have a notion of *any other rewards and punishments* than such as relate to *this world* only, for their *conduct* must depend on their *opinion* in this matter.

WHEN the King gives an office he requires that the parties shall receive the *Sacrament*, as a proof that they are *Christian Protestants*. We have many *Papists* amongst us, and it is certain that the *policy* of their Church does not lead them to be in friendship with us; yet I had much rather entertain a Servant of that communion, who believes the first principles of the *Christian religion*, though mixed with errors, than one who gives himself no trouble at all about religion: and the man who acts as if he believed he shall be saved by the *piety of his Master or Mistress*, is surely as *absurd and ignorant*

as he who expects his prayers will be heard, through the *mediation of St. Anthony, or St. Ann.*

It is the duty of all Christians to obey the precepts of their *crucified Lord*; and one of the *last of his commands* was, to *receive the sacrament of his supper*. This *act of obedience* is essential to *Christianity*, and not to comply with it, seems to denote that we are *not Christians* in any sense at all; or that we live in some *habitual sin*. Now in either of these cases there is sufficient grounds for *alarm*, even upon the principle of *worldly policy*. Of the two evils it must be confessed, that a *careless habit* is less dangerous to Society than *Libertinism*: but, my Lord, how will it stand with us, when we come to make up our *last account*, if we are *indifferent* about the conduct of our *Domestics*, over whom we may have so great an *influence*? If we give them no *precepts* nor *admonitions*, when we see them wandering out of the *Paths of everlasting felicity*, I am afraid we are *deviating* ourselves from those paths, and loading the account of *our own transgressions*.

HERE again we may perceive that the rooting up that species of corruption which we call *Kails*, and establishing a *firm and solid* connec-

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tion between *Master* and *Servant*, will have the greatest weight, and act with a double force on the minds of this *class* of the people. Religion itself, will become better understood, with regard to *subordination*, and as a means to obtain substantial happiness *here* and *hereafter*; so that in this view alone this Vails-giving is an object of very great importance.

An honest Man is the noblest work of God, whether he wears the uniform of a *king*, or the Livery of a *private person*: yet I do not think that the Domestic in a *private livery*, is equal in office to a *husbandman* or a *mechanic*. On the other hand, the Servant who is near the person of a Nobleman, or a Gentleman who is *eminently distinguished*, derives an importance from it which renders him *respectable*: but it is beyond all dispute, that the more *virtuous* he is, the more *respectable* he will be.

THOUGH the price of this kind of *Servitude* is generally beyond that of *agriculture* or *labor*, yet it ought to be remembered that both the *Husbandman* and *Laborer* enjoy a greater degree of *independancy*, and are generally better qualified to get their bread, than the *Domestic in Livery*, when *out of place*: and as few people have *humanity* and *patriotism*

trictism sufficient to entertain married servants, there is the more reason to enable them, to lay up money, in order to put them in a proper way of life; and I see no reason why this class of the people should be prohibited marriage more than any other.

In order therefore, that Servants may make the better *Husbands, Fathers, and Subjects*, I humbly conceive, my Lord, that if a preference were given to all young persons who have learnt some useful art, (when they offer themselves as domestics,) they would be the better enabled in case of marriage, to retire from service and get their bread. Perhaps it might encourage them to begin to learn something useful early in life: certain it is, if this can be carried into execution, virtue and numbers will encrease together so much the more; and the happiness of Individuals, will keep the better pace with the glory and strength of the Nation. It is a miserable thing to be able to do nothing but stand at a Turnpike or sell Beer, which if I mistake not, are the principal promotions of Domestics who marry, though some become Farmers, and after their servitude, are advanced in life, which they ought to be, if they have Talents. I have thrown this thought out, for Your Grace's correction, and not as being certain it can take place.

I HAVE now only to beg Your Grace will show the more attention to what I have advanced upon the subject of *Vails*, from the great Authorities I have before me; witness the *Clerks* of the Signet in Edinburgh, the *faculty of advocates* in that city; and as I understand the *Nobility and Gentry in Scotland*; the *Opera Club* in London, the Gentlemen who composed the last *Grand Jury of the County of Northumberland*; besides many other Noblemen, Gentlemen, and Merchants. These are powerful *advocates* to support my *plea*, though the practice of the *bulk of the Nation* is diametrically opposite to it. *The Gentlemen of Wiltshire assembled at the Assizes at Salisbury*, it was said, resolved unanimously not to suffer their *Servants* to accept of *Vails*, *Card-money*, &c. after the expiration of next month, determining at the same time to make a reasonable addition to their wages, but it happens not to be true; they only meditated such a thing.

Thus we may hope, my Lord, that this *Hydra* is not invincible. If Noblemen and Gentlemen in general, mean to act with any becoming spirit, they will not hesitate to declare to their *Servants*, “that they will not give any more *vails*, *card-money*, or any such perquisite; and as they naturally expect their friends will not give
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more than themselves, therefore it will be prudent in them (their servants) to accept of such a moderate augmentation of wages as shall be agreed on." The same Declaration should be made to their friends. As to any *conditions* in case of receiving money clandestinely, what other punishment can be inflicted, than that of discharge from service? The *fashion* being once changed, there could not be many *delinquents* who received money, because few persons would give it; and the business would execute itself. I see no necessity for a *list* of those who now *decline* giving Vails; every one may proceed *cheerfully*, and with the utmost *confidence* of supporting the measure.

Your Grace will not be surprized that I have troubled you with *so many letters*: the subject is very *extensive*, and *interesting*: I feel for my *Neighbors* as well as for *myself*; and I ought in all reason to hope that YOUR GRACE's *example*, will shine forth and diffuse a lustre on those who follow it. The Nation has shown an *intrepidity* towards their *enemies*, which brightens up the tombs of our *bravest Ancestors*; I hope we shall be no less *steady* in showing a proper spirit towards each other. We have also shown the highest marks of *christian love* for our *enemies*, though they have not always

ways deserved it; may we not *correct abuses*, and at the same time give as eminent proof of *gratitude, affection, and esteem*, for those who have served us *faithfully*, in the capacity of *Domestic servants*? I *hope* this will be done; I *trust* it will be executed in such a manner, as will no longer subject *gratitude, affection, and esteem*, to be despoiled of all their charms, either by an *indiscriminate, and perplexing prodigality*, on the present *plan of Vails-giving*, or by any *future narrow and inconsiderate parcimony*, which may create any diminution of the happiness of *domestic Servants*. My intention, is not to *abridge the emoluments of Servants in any case, unless where they are extravagant, but to encrease their felicity, as well as our own, by introducing a more steady connexion, and by rendering our mutual confidence solid and permanent*. There is a measure in all things; and if we can find the happy medium, we may naturally expect greater happiness will arise from it, than from the extreme on either side.

Millions have been born and died under the Tyranny of *Vails-giving*: it is high time to abolish it. Life at best is very short, and there are many *unavoidable inquietudes in it*: some of these are indeed productive of *riches and honors*; but to indulge ourselves in a *Custom*, which produces
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only *poverty* or *disgrace*, can be called by no other name than *absolute infatuation*!

WE naturally wish to pass our days in *ease*, and with *dignity*; and to be as *virtuous* and *rational* as possible. I am sure the *advantages* which will arise from this amendment in our *Customs* and *Manners*, will be apparent in a very short time; and abundantly repay the little trouble it will cost. *Masters* will become *really Masters*, and they should be esteemed as *Fathers* to their *Domestics*. They will acquire so much greater *Power* and *Influence* in *promoting Virtue* and *discouraging Vice* in their families, that every kind of *Blessing* may be expected in consequence of so happy a change.—And it is with the most *devout wish*, that every thing may *succeed* which is for the *welfare of my Country*; and with the *deepest respect* for *YOUR GRACE'S person, felicity, and renown*, that I am,

MY LORD,

YOUR GRACE'S

Most humble,

London,

Aug. 1760.

And most devoted Servant,

THE END.